The Intoxicating Allure of Steam Power and the Future of Avalor

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The Intoxicating Allure of Steam Power and the Future of Avalor

by lefemmerouge

Summary

Isabel, in her 30s and part of the Avalor Science Academy, has invented many devices that either run on steam or use it an efficient manner, instead of using coal or oil. In the process, she works with assistants like Lucia, her daughter, and others from across Avalor. She even was working on a horseless carriage and knew that steam power could revolutionize the lives of those in Everrealm's 140 kingdoms, including those in Avalor. One day, Isabel stumbles upon a rip in the fabric of space-time, and she visits a country completely powered by steam, which is technologically advanced beyond her wildest dreams. She soon returns to Avalor, informing her sister, Queen Elena, and her partner, Naomi, who she had been married to for the past 18 years, of the discovery. Elena immediately convenes an emergency Grand Council meeting, hoping to reach a consensus of what to do next, since she knows that the mysterious kingdom could hold the key to moving Avalor into the industrial age, despite the fact that anyone who travels through the dimensional drift could be trapped in strange country forever, with no way of returning to Avalor. What happens next is up to Elena, Naomi, Isa, and the decision of the council...

Notes

While there are a few fics which mention Steamland like RenkonNairu's "Vigilant Queen," cannedgoo's "Mermaid Nights," and orphan_account's " Bean, The Buzzy Stick, and Stience," this is the beginning of a series specifically about Steamland! I'm not sure how many people will read this, ultimately, but I thought it would be worth a shot!

Comments are welcome and appreciated.

Update on 12/13/24: Originally I asked people to subscribe to the Eleanaomi sub but it is since been locked. Instead, I'd like to mention that this fic has been cross-posted on Squidge World, with the revised version posted here, and this fic divided into two chapters.

See the end of the work for more notes

- Inspired by The Windflower Chronicles by RySenkari

Chapter 1: Planning the Expedition

No one on the Grand Council could believe their ears. Crown Princess Isabel Castillo Flores regaled them with tales about a land she had visited, by accident. This far away kingdom was technologically advanced beyond anything she thought possible and all powered by steam! Elena remained attentive, as did Francisco and Luisa, and even Mateo, who had long since replaced Dona Paloma on the council. Naomi, Elena's wife, and Chancellor, remained inquisitive, asking Isa questions about her journey.

"You mentioned that steam powered everything in this...place you visited. Can you describe more about that? I mean, what technologies could they have which you found...so amazing that you had to tell us *all* about it?"

Isa scratched her chin and thought about Naomi's question. She wanted to explain what she saw in a way that those on the council could understand. She sighed and formulated an answer. She didn't always like the formality of the council, as she would rather refer to Naomi by her first name, but she got around these pesky rules by not calling Naomi "Ms. Turner," as it seemed awkward to her.

"It was...ALL so...amazing! There were these flying blimps with something that called 'propellers,' horses with wheels which people rode on, sounds that moved through the air with something called 'speakers,' and pictures which projected on some sort of surface. At one point, went into some storefront and asked a person in there the knobs on a wall were, telling me they were 'buzzbrighters,' automatic electric-powered lights...I never thought something like that was possible, at least not on a large scale."

The other council members sat attentively, wondering what Isa would reveal next about this *mysterious country*. Mateo, of all people, posed a question, surprising Elena, Luisa, Francisco, and Naomi, as they did not expect him to ask a question about this, since they thought he was interested in magic, rather than technology, since he was the royal magician of Avalor after all.

"You've talked about the technology in this place...whatever it is called...were there any magicians or use of magic? Do you think it is worth mounting an expedition to explore it?"

Isa, again, did not want to disappoint the council. Mateo's question had put a *lot of pressure* on her. She breathed deeply and decided to give him the most honest answer she could.

"Well...I never saw anyone use magic, at least not openly. In this place apparently named 'Steamland,' they used science as the basis for everything. I mean, there were machines that flew through the sky, moving motorized walkways, bicycles which hummed, and these machines with expandable metal arms, with their heads in-cased in a glass surface and light coming out of them, chasing this one white-haired girl all the way to the docks. I followed her there and..."

Elena immediately interrupted Isa as she was surprised her sister would do such a thing. It wasn't the way they operated, at least not anymore.

"You followed her? Why? You shouldn't be doing..."

Isa cackled and continued.

"Elena, I had to...she appeared to be so out of place, with a round nose and freckles, buck teeth like a rabbit, a cyan-colored tunic which had white sleeves, brown boots and leggings, and a belt with a silver buckle. She was like someone from Avalor...who had...bad fashion sense...I wish I had my presto-changer with me to give her *a better outfit*."

Intrigued, Elena pressed her for further explanation.

"Did this...girl...as you call her, have a name? And...why was she there?"

"I overheard someone calling her 'Bean' when she went into some building, I think to save her friend...I later saw her with this greenish elf who she called 'Elfo'...I was about to say hello to her, but an electric charge came out of her fingers and caused the whole city to *go pitch black*. I thought she would come for me next, so I ran back to where I had come through this portal or dimensional drift, whatever you want to call it, grabbing some stuff along the way, stuffing it into my bag...and now I'm here, before you all...and yes, I think we should explore it further, but...*cautiously*."

The council members were fascinated and interested, especially when she showed them the light bulbs in her bag which she had collected on her journey there. All of them saw the potential benefit in Avalor making an alliance with this new country, even if accessing it proved to be problematic.

Elena's voice boomed across the room. "All who are in favor of this expedition to Steamland, raise your hands."

Elena, Naomi, and Mateo raised their hands in favor. Elena spoke once more.

"All those opposed, please raise your hands."

The two other council members, Francisco and Luisa, did not raise their hands. Puzzled, and before announcing the council's decision, she asked them what was wrong. Luisa hugged Elena.

"Me and Francisco are worried about, you, mija. When you talked about an expedition, we knew it would mean you would be going along...and we don't want to lose you, again."

She embraced Luisa. "Don't worry, Abuela, I'll be fine. I *promise* you that I'll come back...it's my duty as the Queen of Avalor. I won't fail this kingdom...no matter what obstacles are in my way." Luisa smiled.

"That's all I wanted to hear. Me and Abuelo will support this, *as long* as you and anyone else going promises to be careful."

Elena nodded and announced the decision. "It is the order of this council that an expedition to Steamland will be authorized as soon as possible," banging the gavel on the table.

She then posed the question to everyone else in the room. "Who wishes to travel with Steamland?"

Francisco and Luisa nodded their heads no, as did Mateo. Naomi and Isa *enthusiastically* shouted "yes!"

Elena grinned and hit the gavel against the table once more. "It is so ordered."

Chapter 2: Love, Danger, and Malcontents

Chapter Summary

Elena, Naomi, and Isa begin their expedition to Steamland, with Naomi and Elena acting loving toward one another, while Isa is in awe with everything in Steamland. What will they find in this steam-powered kingdom? And what will it mean for Avalor? Only time will tell...

Chapter Notes

When I cross-posted this fic on Squidge World, I decided to divide it into two chapters. This constitutes the second half of the *original* fic on here, with the changed text in Squidge World added here.

Elena and Naomi began packing their small leather purses, full of weapons, like daggers, and other accessories, Isa barged into their room, wagging her finger at Elena, pointing at her beautiful red dress which shone in the sunlight pouring in the window.

"Elena, you can't wear something as flashy as that to steamland...you'll be too out of place!" Grumbling, Elena stamped her feet and moved closer to Isa. "Fine! What should I wear then! I wanted to look nice for...Nomes. I don't care what anyone else thinks! What's wrong with that?"

Isa shook her head. "I didn't want to make you angry, Elena...I...wanted to suggest you wore an outfit like the one you wore to the invention fair that time...you know, when you *switched places* with Naomi."

Elena calmed down and laughed.

"Oh yeah, that one...I *still* remember how Naomi was so embarrassed when Abuela found out."

Naomi began blushing a little bit. Elena then pulled her cheek. "You remember that...Nomes?...it was a while ago."

She smiled. "Of course I remember! My mind is a memory bank of all the times we had together...*you silly goose*."

She went ahead, kissed her on the neck, and tickled her a little. "Stoopppp...Nooomes," she said as she giggled over Naomi caressing her neck, while *Isa watched*.

Rolling her eyes, Isa tried to remind them of what they had to do. "You know, we have an expedition, right?"

Naomi and Elena stared at her sternly, wanting to stay together no matter what, and giving her the *leave-us-alone look*. Isa decided to give in.

"Fine...you two can *go on a date* to Steamland and I'll be your wing-woman."

Naomi and Elena cheered. "Yay!" they said in unison. Isa grumbled and directed Naomi to stand on the platform, while wheeling the bicycle to make the wardrobe machine run. Her outfit was the same as the one Naomi had on, but she had a deep reddish-green bodice, with strong reddish lining and flowers on the bottom, on top of a white top, along with a red skirt and a reddish-green strip across the bottom, black boots, and a dark reddish-green belt.

They were ready for their adventure. Isa led them to the Avalor Science Academy, and metal structure with a square opening.

"Ta-da!" she announced. "This is the *long-awaited* portal to Steamland! I constructed something for it, to make it better...and more official."

Elena tussled Isa's hair and commented "Isa, thanks for doing this."

"Not a problem," she quipped.

Elena and Naomi held each other's hands while Isa walked beside them. All three stepped *into the unknown* and entered the so-called "kingdom" of Steamland. They were greeted by face fulls of steam and observed zeppelins, hot air balloons, and other flying contraptions in the skies above. In the distance there were escalators and subways. They scanned the streets. On the roadways were bustling with the horses on wheels, as some called them, motorcycles, and steam-powered bikes. Advertisements for "hot steam," airships, tea stores, bookstores, coffee houses, watch factories, amusements, and other businesses in the city plastered some of the walls. Many of the people wore drab clothing, in dark browns, greens, and strange retro-futuristic hats. Others wore capes and dresses with a little frill, but not too fancy. However, due to the egalitarian nature of the society, no one paid any mind to anything those around them wore and dressed how they pleased.

Taking in all of the sights around them, Elena commented "Isa, you were so right! This place is awesome...although it's a bit drab. It doesn't have all the beautiful colors of somewhere like Avalor."

Naomi jested her. "We don't need all of that...because you *ARE Avalor*, Elena! You are as dazzling as waterfalls in Avalor City, the peak of Mooncliff Mountain, the tiles of Avalor Palace, and the Jaquins flying through the skies. I have all of Avalor with me...all the time."

The skin complexion on Elena changed a bit as her cheeks became warm and she began twirling her hair with her finger. "Nomes, that's sweet of you to say...I..."

Naomi cut her off and whispered to her. "You don't have to say anything else, you adorable goof...let's have a fun time."

Isa again rolled her eyes as Elena and Naomi kissed each other. She didn't mind Naomi and Elena being together but felt left out as their wing woman.

Isa pointed at a nearby stand of a craft brewery shop named Bitsy's Bitterbeer. "Let's go there!" Naomi laughed. "We are here to explore, not to drink until we pass out."

Isa pleaded with her and Elena. "Come on...a little sip...please?"

Elena grumbled. As soon as she was about to agree, Isa saw something much more interesting: a train powered by...steam! She immediately lost interest in the brewery shop and stared at wonder at the technological marvel before her.

"Let's go that way...and ride in one of those metal steam-powered machines!"

Before Elena could open her mouth, Naomi, as excited about the machine as Isa, pulled Elena toward her. She pointed to the railcar and proceeded to talk to a stranger.

"Uh...Miss, do you know where we can get on that...thing?"

The woman laughed. "You must be *new* here...you can catch the steamrail...at a station a few blocks from here, at the corner of Gunderson Drive and Punky Avenue."

Naomi nodded and thanked the woman for her help.

Isa, Naomi, and Elena made their way to the steamrail station, huffing and puffing after running all the way there. The doors of the train opened, and they walked inside, sitting down on some of the available seats.

"All customers, please keep your hands inside the car at all times, and be mindful of other passengers," a loudspeaker blared.

The message continued. "Enjoy your free ride on the steamrail courtesy of the Gunderson Steamwork Company. Gunderson. *It's steam, it's clean, and it's green*."

The train sped forward. The buttons on one side of the car lit up, allowing passengers to request a stop, whether an attraction in the city, their workplace, or some public institution. Scanning the buttons, Isa saw one labeled "ARCHIVES" and pressed it. She remembered the archives back in Avalor and how she had cleaned it up with her technological prowess, making it accessible to the citizenry, even hiring some of the ordinary citizens *as archivists*. She was curious to find out how the materials were organized and categorized in this city, considering the focus on science and technology in this steam-powered fantasia.

Elena and Naomi glimpsed out the windows with awe as they passed through the city, clustered with buildings towering into the sky, while Isa remained fascinated by the design of the inside of this machine and all the buttons, listening closely to each of the stops being announced, but the train kept going.

Sound boomed out of the speakers. "Next stop is the Steamland Archives and Museum."

The conductor pulled a cord, and the steam whistle rang out as the train came to a stop.

The doors opened and the conductor announced: "This stop is Steamland Archives and Museum. Please mind the gap between the train and the station platform."

Elena, Naomi, and Isa stepped out of the railcar, through a cloud of steam and saw a grand building before them, which sparkled in the sunlight, which poked through the smog from the nearby buildings. This building had huge columns in the front, a towering dome, and long windows with intricate latticework. While it was officially called the Steamland Archives and Museum, everyone called it the SAM for short, because it was easier to say. Before they entered the building, they came across a woman in armor who had long dirty blond hair, with shades of bronze and light taupe, covered by her helmet.

The woman, part of The League of Gallivanting Scrutinators, called out to them. "Hey, can I take picture of you all with my camera...it will be free of charge!"

Elena, Naomi, and Isa all shrugged their shoulders, all of them tentatively saying "Yes?" They had *no idea* what a "picture" or a "camera" was, as nothing like it existed in Avalor. Isa guessed that like everything else in Steamland, it was powered by steam, but she wasn't sure how it worked.

The woman cranked the camera and snapped a photograph, handing it to Elena, telling her to use her hand to wave it back and forth until the colors settled.

She snickered and added, "you all aren't from around here, are you?"

All three of them nodded. "I thought so," the lady continued. "I didn't introduce myself earlier, but I'm Lady Bowmore. What's your names?"

"I'm Elena, the queen of A...," Elena said before Isa covered up her mouth, softly speaking in her ear, *reminding* her that revelation of their true identities would ruin this mission to observe this country in all its reported glory.

Lady Bowmore was intrigued. "A queen? Well, there was that girl a couple days ago who is the princess of that place...called Dreamland I think."

She laughed *mischievously* and went onto say, "...but she wasn't as pretty as you, Ms. Elena."

Surprised by such praise from a stranger, Elena remained speechless, but Naomi came to her defense. "Stop trying to hit on my girl...wife!"

Bowman waved her hand and cackled. "Fine...fine...but I think you are real fine too, lady."

Naomi, as Elena had done earlier, blushed, and didn't know what to say. Isa took the arms of both of them and pulled them inside the archives, yelling "you *can't flirt* with any random woman...that ain't right!"

Bowman shouted back, "I like girls, that's how it is! See you around, *cutiepie*!"

Isa grumbled while Elena and Naomi felt relieved. "Whew, at least we got out of that one. Thanks for your help, Isa," Elena said, still catching her breath.

Isa smiled. "I didn't want you or Naomi to get any unwanted attention because *someone* thinks you are cute. I'm always looking out for you both."

Naomi shook her head. She couldn't believe that *someone else* would flirt with her wife on *their* "observation" mission. She knew that no one in Avalor would dare do such a thing, even if they liked Elena, because they knew that she would give them a tongue-lashing, although *not literally*. Isa, shortly thereafter, stuck the photograph in her pack, securing it to make sure that it did not get damaged and that she could show it to the Grand Council.

A woman with mahogany-colored skin, wearing a reddish leather top hat adorned with gears, a burgundy coat with sleeves and some frills, white gloves, and a grayish skirt, welcomed them. She appeared more professional than some of those they had observed in the streets. She certainly acted differently and more openly than any of the archivists in Avalor which Elena and the others had grown accustomed to and read stories about. Noticing they were not from Steamland, she changed her greeting slightly to what she would tell normal Steamlandians.

"Hello, fellow travelers. What can I do for you today?"

Before Elena or Naomi could say anything, Isa interjected.

"We are here to learn the history of Steamland!"

The archivist beamed. "I'm so glad to hear that. I'll tell you a little about what we do here. And before I forget, you can call me Mx. Lawlor."

Elena shook her hand and smiled. "Nice to meet you, Ms. Lawlor."

She began showing them around the archives reading room, lit by a huge and beautiful glass chandelier, explaining that the artifacts there came from far-away lands, courtesy of The League of Gallivanting Scrutinators, and that the archives held inactive records from the corporations in the city and the government institutions determined to have a continuing, and long-term, historical value. A few other people were there, busy examining precious paper documents, and taking notes on lined paper with pencils, as pens could stain records.

Elena whispered to Mx. Lawlor, "why don't they have gloves on? Shouldn't people wear gloves on when they handle something that...old? Won't they damage the records?"

Mx. Lawlor heartily laughed.

"Oh, no, miss, that *isn't needed*, despite what you've seen or heard. They make documents harder to handle and examine."

Elena nodded. Even at her age, she was always open to new knowledge. Isa, standing next her sister, continued to take copious notes about her observations in Steamland in order to

prepare a report to the Grand Council. Unexpectedly, Naomi let go of Elena's hand, curiously examining an artifact enclosed in a glass case.

The sudden movement by Naomi caused Elena to spin around, almost losing her balance and falling to the floor. Helped up by Naomi, she told her "that's a pretty gem, isn't it?"

Elena stared down at the cyan diamond with horror. It had the *same appearance* as the one in her royal scepter, also known as the scepter of light, which she had foolishly not brought with her. When she approached it, it began to glow like her scepter, amazing the fellow patrons and archivists.

Somehow the diamond burst out of its glass case, with a piece of glass slicing Elena on the hand. Miraculously, *none* of the patrons, archivists, Naomi, or Isa were injured by the glass. Wincing with pain, the diamond floated through the air and dropped into her hand with a thud.

Strangely her hand felt warm. She scanned her hand with her eyes for the cut caused by the glass from the destroyed glass case and...it had disappeared! She thought to herself, *what kind of weird stone is this?...It can...heal people?* and saw the potential of how it could help her subjects, even imagining herself as heading a clinic where she healed people. Without a second thought, she grabbed the diamond tightly and steadfastly *refused* to give it to Ms. Lawlor or any of the other archives staff who had come to aid them.

Sighing, the archivist carefully approached Elena and attempted to get the diamond back.

"Miss, can you, please, let go of the gemstone. We won't press charges. Put it down and we'll forget this whole thing happened."

Elena became enraged. With such a stone, she could single-handedly help her people and free them from physical agony. It would be a "revolution," although *not* the scientific one Isa had been working for.

She stomped her feet on the ground.

"I am Elena Castillo Flores, Queen of the Kingdom of Avalor and I will do whatever is necessary to help my subjects...even if it means defying people like...YOU!"

Naomi and Isa tried to stop her too.

"Elena, please...you don't need this diamond...give it to them," Naomi pleaded.

Isa shook her head. "Sis, listen to the archivist and *drop* that diamond... then, we can go...in peace."

For a second she prepared to hand over the stone, but something possessed her to continue holding it.

She ran toward Naomi and Isa, aggressively grabbed their arms and *loudly screamed*, "I'm not going ANYWHERE!...this diamond is MINE!"

As they struggled to escape her grasp, she forced their hands to touch the diamond, causing them to *become angry and hostile* toward to the archivist and their assistants, who grabbed their pistols nearby and tentatively pointed them at the group. Elena, Isa, and Naomi raised their fists in the air and exclaimed "For Avalor!"

In what appeared to be a bluish swirl of smoke, they disappeared into nothingness, like they had never been there in the first place.

Mx. Lawlor confided in her fellow staff. "What the heck just happened? Who was that woman?...what the heck is Avalor?"

The other staff members shrugged. No one could completely piece together what had happened. The archives had become, to the staff's lament, *a crime scene of sorts*.

Across the city, a tan skinned man, the head of the Gunderson Steamwork Company, with curly brown hair, reclined in his chair. He sat behind a desk with a placard reading "Alva Gunderson, CEO." He twirled his mustache, contemplating what could be done about the "incident" at the archives after watching it unfold on his rudimentary telescreen.

He called out to his assistant, Mr. Dickens.

"Yes, sir," the young man answered timidly.

Alva chuckled. "No reason to be afraid, my fine chap. I'd like you to go down to the SAM. I'd like to have a talk with that...Mx. Lawlor about our...Elena problem."

The man bowed. "Yes sir, right away sir. I will do that post-haste."

He walked out of the room, opening the door, then closing it behind him.

Alva snickered. "Ms. Flores, you will pay for what you did...you haven't seen the last of Steamland...this is only the beginning!"

End Notes

I used the pages on the Elena of Avalor Wiki for the "Grand Council of Avalor," "Scepter of Light," "Avalor," "Naomi Turner," and "Ever Realm," and the Sofia the First wiki for "EverRealm," and on the Disenchantment Wiki for "Queen Bean," "Alva Gunderson," "Lady Bowmore," and "Steamland." I rewatched part of "The Electric Princess" again to make sure I got the look of Steamland right. I also used Reddit posts, "Steampunk Library Concept by Leartes Studios" (an illustration by I_Burn_Cereal) and "The French National Library's Oval Room without books, tables or people" (a photograph by Thibaud Poirier) as inspiration for how to describe the archives here and here. There aren't any illustrations of Steampunk archives I could find, so I sadly had to use one of libraries instead. I also wanted to make the archivist a woman of color, especially since all the images I used as reference were White women. At the same time, I used the helpful "9 Positive Ways to Describe Dark Skin" article (lists ebony, espresso, mahogany, chestnut skin, almond skin, melanin-rich, chocolate, cocoa, and mocha as descriptors to describe dark skin tones) to come with the right color to describe her skin complexion. I know there was a Twitter post I read about it recently which was really good, but I sadly lost it, so I had to use that article instead. I found the name Lawlor in some Victorian name generator and it seemed to make sense to me, while deciding also to make Mx. Lawlor a non-binary and Black character too. I haven't decided on their first name yet, but I'll figure that out in the next fic.

Works inspired by this one

Elena's Nightmare and the Mysterious Ship from Beyond the Stars by lefemmerouge2

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!